

Three kinds of injunction (Vidhi)

(By S.N.Sastri)

The injunctions in the Vedas are of three kinds, known as:—
अपूर्वविधिः, नियमविधिः and परिसंख्याविधिः.

अपूर्वविधिः -- (Original injunction).

This is an injunction which lays down something that is not already known through any other pramana. For example, the sentence, त्रीहीन् प्रोक्षति, meaning, “One should sprinkle the rice grains”, in the course of the new-moon and full-moon sacrifices, is an original injunction, because the need to purify the grains which are to be used for the preparation of the sacrificial oblation (पुरोडाश) by sprinkling water on them is not known from any other source.

नियमविधिः—(Restrictive injunction).

When a certain result can be accomplished by more than one method, an injunction which lays down that only one particular method is to be adopted is a restrictive injunction. For example the sentence “त्रीहीनवहन्ति” which means “One should pound the rice grains” is such an injunction. Dehusking of the grains to get the rice necessary for making the sacrificial oblation can be done either by pounding in a mortar or by splitting with the finger-nails. This injunction imposes the restriction that the former method, namely pounding, is to be adopted and not the latter.

The importance of such a restrictive injunction lies in the fact that the action performed in accordance with it produces an invisible result called ‘नियमापूर्व’ which contributes to the total अपूर्व from the sacrifice as a whole.

परिसंख्याविधिः— (Injunction of exclusion)

When two actions can be simultaneously performed, the injunction which excludes one of them is known as परिसंख्याविधिः. In order to make bricks for building a sacrificial altar, clay is brought on the backs of a horse and a donkey. In this context there is a sentence- इमामगृभ्ण रशनामृतस्येत्यश्वाभिधानीमादत्ते—

which means, “One should hold the rein of the horse, reciting the mantra, ‘They held the rein of the sacrifice’. It is possible to hold the reins of both the horse and the donkey simultaneously while reciting the mantra. But the above sentence excludes the holding of the rein of the donkey. The rein of the donkey is to be held without reciting any mantra. So, as the purport of the sentence is to exclude the holding of the rein of the donkey, it is an instance of परिसंख्याविधिः:

Another example is the sentence ‘पञ्चं पञ्चनखा भक्ष्याः’, which means, “Five five-nailed animals (alone) may be eaten”. This excludes all five-nailed animals other than the five specified, and also animals which do not have five nails. Thus this is

also an injunction of exclusion. It must be noted here that, unlike the example of parisankhyavidhi given above, in which the chanting of the mantra while holding the rein of the horse is obligatory, this example of parisankhyavidhi does not enjoin any action, but only excludes certain things. The eating of the five five-nailed animals is not obligatory for any one. The injunction only means that if one wants to eat meat, he should eat only the meat of these five animals and not other meat.

Another example of an injunction of exclusion is the sentence 'एकादश्यां फलाहारं कुर्यात्, which means, "One may eat fruits on Ekadasi day". Here eating of anything other than fruits is excluded, but eating of fruits is not obligatory. For those who cannot observe complete fast, fruits are prescribed.

A niyamavidhi enjoins the adoption of a particular alternative, namely, pounding of the grains, and prohibits other alternatives, such as splitting with the finger-nails. It thus contains both a vidhi and a nishedha. The parisankhyavidhi in the context of the holding of the reins of the horse and the donkey also contains both a vidhi and a nishedha. The vidhi enjoins reciting the mantra while holding the rein of the horse and the nishedha prohibits chanting of the mantra while holding the rein of the donkey. It may therefore appear that there is no difference between the two vidhis. But there is a difference. The difference is that while both the alternatives cannot be simultaneously adopted in the case of the niyamavidhi, they can be simultaneously adopted in the case of the parisankhyavidhi. One cannot at the same time pound the grains and split them with the finger-nails, but one can simultaneously hold the reins of the horse and the donkey. The same applies also to the other two examples of parisankhyavidhi given above.

(Source-- Mimamsa-Paribhasha of Krishna Yajvan and Arthasamgraha of Laugakshi Bhaskara).